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Brand Orientation in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) from Malaysian Government Perspective

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to develop a brand orientation model based on Malaysian SMEs context. Semi-structured interviews were selected as the research method in order to get an expert opinion from Small and Medium Size Enterprise Corporation Malaysia (SME Corp) and Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE). Both agencies operate under Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) to support SMEs and they were chosen for this study because they have long experience in promoting branding to SMEs. Four major levels of brand orientation have emerged from the data analysis: absent, low, medium, and high. This paper highlights the importance of branding for Malaysian SMEs and emphasizes the crucial issues related to the adoption of branding process and the solutions provided by Malaysian government to enhance brand development. This research is among the restricted works that have studied brand orientation from the governmental perspective and have proposed a related model. It suggests considering the proposed model and referring to SME Competitiveness Rating for Enhancement (SCORE) for future studies on branding in Malaysian SMEs.

Keywords: Brand, brand orientation, SMEs, managers, Government.

Introduction

SMEs play a vital role in improving economic dynamism. They constitute the majority of companies in developed and developing countries. SMEs contribute significantly to job creation, income growth, and poverty reduction (Erenkol & Öztaş 2015). According to OECD (2017), structured SMEs in emerging markets make up 45 % of total employment and 33 % of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Despite the importance of SMEs for every economy's growth, a significant number of SMEs are still suffering to sustain in the market place (Cheng et al. 2014) and face multiple challenges in their quest